Volunteer Befrienders

A training course for volunteers wishing to befriend individuals who have experience of mental health problems

13th, 16th and 23rd April 2016

All Saint’s Church, 100 Prince of Wales Drive, SW11

General course information

The course will be facilitated by Ermias Alemu, Battersea Befriending Network (“BBN”)’s training lead, and Chris Culwick, BBN Committee member, both of whom have wide professional experience in the field. It will include talks, inter-active sessions, DVD presentations, listening exercises and some role play.

Where to come for the training

All the sessions will be held at All Saints’ Church, 100 Prince of Wales Drive, SW11 4BD. This is a small modern building opposite Battersea Park, 40 yards from the large Queenstown Road roundabout. It is close to both Battersea Park and Queenstown Road rail stations and to bus routes 44, 137, 156 and 452. There is usually ample free parking on Prince of Wales Drive and adjacent streets, but major works on the roundabout are currently making this more tricky, especially in the evenings.

If you have problems finding us – or need to let us know that you are held up and will be late – please phone Richard Trout (Befriending Co-ordinator) on 07932 038190

Battersea Befriending Network

Battersea Befriending Network is a voluntary sector organisation dedicated to creating and supporting one-to-one friendships between trained volunteers and adults living in the community who experience social isolation due to mental health problems.

It is affiliated to an established registered charity, APCMH / Being Alongside, which has been operating a similar befriending scheme in the neighbouring London Borough of Merton since 1991. It also has the backing of the South West London & St George’s Mental Health Trust, Wandsworth Council Social Services, and Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network.

Our Ethos
The ethos of Battersea Befriending Network is summed up in the phrase ‘building hope and confidence together’ and expressed through its core values of compassion, empathy, social inclusion, standing alongside, mutual respect and trust, acceptance of self and others, valuing the spiritual, creating relationship and sharing the journey.

Underpinned by these principles, this training course aims to help participants develop the skills and confidence to act as volunteer befrienders for those who have experience of mental ill-health.

**Course Programme**

**Session 1**  
Wednesday, 13th April 2016  
19.30 – 21.30

**Course Introduction and overview**

The evening is intended to allow space and time for us to introduce ourselves to each other, to ask questions about BBN and the ensuing course, and begin to think around some of the issues associated with befriending.

**Session 2**  
Saturday, 16th April 2016  
10.00 – 12.00

**Our understanding of mental health**

From our own perspective and experience we look at our understanding of mental health and how some of the common mental health problems manifest themselves.

**Society’s understanding and reaction to mental health**

Building on the first half of the session, we look at some of society’s attitudes to mental health problems and explore the different impacts mental health problems can have on people and their close surroundings.

**Session 3**  
Saturday, 16th April 2016  
13.00 – 15.30

**Boundaries and listening skills**
After lunch, we look at the roles and responsibilities that a befriending relationship entails and explore the skills needed to keep boundaries and be an effective listener.

**Culture, spirituality & mental health**

In this session we will explore the effect which our cultural and spiritual backgrounds have on our perception and understanding of mental health problems.

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**Session 4**        **Saturday, 23rd April 2016**  
12.00

**Sharing the experience of befrienders**

Some of the experienced befrienders will share and discuss with us their first-hand experience of their befriending involvements. This will include ample time for questions.

**Session 5**        **Saturday, 23rd April 2016**  
15.30

**Looking at our needs as befrienders**

In the afternoon we look at what each of us can bring to the role of befriender, the specific needs and resources required to become an effective befriender, and where these can be found.

**Ending relationships**

Finally, we briefly explore the subject of ending relationships, when they occur and how to work through our own ending at the completion of the course.

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**PLEASE NOTE:**

On the evening of 13th April, light hot and cold refreshments (vegetarian) will be available from 7.00 p.m. onwards.
On both Saturdays, tea and coffee will be available from 9.45 a.m. and a home-cooked vegetarian lunch will be provided between the morning and afternoon sessions.

We value your interest in volunteering as a befriender and this is a part of our “Thank you” for taking the time to attend!